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show that it is a real contribution to the study of the subject. It is to be hoped that the fruit of his accurate and patient investigation may stimulate other scholars to a similar study of the other versions of Ecclesiasticus.

A. COWLEY.

THE WISDOM OF BEN SIRA.

The Wisdom of Ben Sira. Portions of Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Geniza Collection, presented to the University of Cambridge by the Editors. Edited for the Syndics of the University Press by S. SCHECHTER, M.A., Litt.D., Reader in Rabbinic in the University of Cambridge, and Professor of Hebrew in University College, London, and C. TAYLOR, D.D., Master of St. John's College, Cambridge. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1899. [Pp. lxxxvii, 68 and (24).]

[PRELIMINARY NOTICE.]

THIS well-edited volume, taken together with the pages printed by the Rev. George Margoliouth in the present number of the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, exhausts the Fragments of the Hebrew Ecclesiasticus which have been recovered from the Cairo Geniza. To Professor Schechter belongs the honour of identifying the very first Fragment found. But he has earned more than the praise of mere discovery. He has studied the texts with penetration, has illustrated them with fullness of learning, and has discussed them with critical insight. His Notes and Introduction to the Hebrew text before us are the first ripe fruit of his labours. He will no doubt have more to say when the batteries of scholars hostile to the pretensions of the Hebrew have been unmasked. In the Master of St. John's he has found a capable coadjutor, whose contribution to the Cambridge volume is worthy of his reputation. The English Translation with the Notes and Appendix to it are by Dr. Taylor; the Hebrew Text, the Introduction to it, and the Notes fall to the share of Professor Schechter.

The Fragments contained in this volume come from two MSS. MS. A consists of four leaves of paper very full of writing, and includes ch. iii. 6 to vii. 29, xi. 34 to xvi. 26. MS. B consists of seven leaves of paper. It comes from the same Codex as the Lewis-Gibson and the Bodleian Fragments, and contains ch. xxx. 11 to xxxiii. 3, xxxv. 9 to xxxvi. 21, xxxvii. 27 to xxxviii. 27, and xlix. 12 to the end

of the book. The passages supplied by the British Museum Fragments, published above, will be seen to supply some of the gaps in MS. B.

So much space has been allotted in the present number of the JEWISH QUARTERLY to Ben Sira, that I am forced to crowd out much that I had written on the subject. It would, however, be unjust to the Cambridge editors, and disloyal to the cause of truth, were I to deny myself sufficient space to express in the briefest words some general conclusions, and to pronounce a very necessary protest.

First, it would be unjust to the Cambridge editors, and particularly to Professor Schechter, were one to allow an ephemeral controversy as to the originality of the Hebrew to obscure the lasting merits of their editorial work. Every one who has made a close study of the Cambridge volume will agree with what Professor Smend has said in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* for September 2: "Schechter hat sich durch seine Entdeckungen um die gesammte biblische Wissenschaft ein bleibendes Verdienst erworben. Ihm gebührt um so grösserer Dank, als er mit dem Glück des Finders Thatkraft, Gelehrsamkeit und Umsicht vereinigte." The thorough familiarity with the Bible which Mr. Schechter displays, his unrivalled knowledge of the Rabbinical literature, his intimate acquaintance with the versions of Ben Sira, his felicitous treatment of the problems presented, e.g. by the praise of the Sons of Zadok in ch. li, his frankness in presenting all the facts without regard to their effect for or against his own view as to the authenticity of the Hebrew, his provision of the materials on which a final judgment can be based as to this authenticity, his acute suggestions as to emendations—in all these directions he proves himself a true and honest scholar, keen of perception, equipped with rare and rich gifts. Even if the authenticity of the Hebrew be hereafter discredited—a fate which I do not in the least expect—still Professor Schechter's work would remain a masterpiece, creditable alike to his University and to English letters.

Secondly, a protest must be entered against the tone in which one prominent controversialist is conducting the discussion. It is to be hoped that he will find no imitators. A purely literary question of considerable intricacy must be approached without passion and without abuse. Accusations of blind ignorance and bad faith are not arguments. Further, I trust that there will be no repetition of the attempt to saddle particular scholars with the responsibility for the general acceptance of the Fragments as authentic. Most of the writers with whose work I am acquainted have expressed themselves as convinced of the authenticity, not by this or that authority, but by an independent study of the texts. Professor Margoliouth himself

wrote in April, 1897, that "Every page offers examples of cases where the difference between the Greek and the Syriac can be explained only by recurrence to the Hebrew." With this statement I fully agree, but my point is that if any scholar feels impelled to recant his opinion, he must not seek to transfer his own mistake to the shoulders of others. Worse still is it when such a recanter, with the zeal of a new convert, makes fierce and undignified attacks upon the scholarship of those who still believe in a text which he himself not so long ago honoured as original.

Reserving remarks on many passages for a later occasion, I will call attention to one or two salient points in the Cambridge volume. It must be freely conceded that the Cairene Fragments are extremely corrupt. Misreadings and misspellings, some of which are noted by the editors, abound. The corruption goes deeper than single words, for whole clauses are mangled and jumbled, and reproduced in varying recensions. It is this combined injury of time and the copyist which gives to the Hebrew in places that rough and ragged appearance, which has not unnaturally aroused unfavourable comment. Before judging the text, the text must be critically restored. But even as it stands, often enough the Hebrew is simple, vivid, cadenced. Many admirable lines might be cited from every page. Nothing, for instance, could be more balanced than Ben Sira's imitation of Prov. xxix. 26 as revealed in the Cairene Hebrew of xiii. 20 תועבת נאווה ענוה ותועבת עשיר אביון. (Note, incidentally, that this verse is missing from the Syriac. Hence if re-translated it must have been rendered from the Greek. But in that case we should expect כן (= Greek οὕτως) in the second clause; the Vulgate indeed has *sic et*. Besides, a re-translator would not have rendered the personal ὑπερηφάνῳ of the Greek by the abstract Hebrew נאווה.) To turn to some longer passages, a reader must be hard to satisfy if he fails to find pleasure in the first seventeen verses of chap. xxxvi. There is unmistakable beauty, too, in the first twelve verses of chap. li; the author uses Scripture with ease and freshness, and the style resembles nothing so much as the canonical Psalter. A close comparison of this passage with the versions utterly precludes the possibility of holding that the Hebrew is derived. But I have called special attention to this chapter because it also indicates that when composing a *set hymn* a writer of the second century B.C. naturally fell into a classical style. On referring to Professor Schechter's notes, one finds that he can here show absolutely none of the neologisms which are common in other parts of the Hebrew Ben Sira. The same passage is interesting from another point of view. In the Cambridge text it is followed by fifteen new verses, which are absent from all the versions. Yet

they are certainly authentic, with the possible exception of the final line in which the quotation from Ps. cxlvii. 14, may be a doxological addition. These fifteen verses are an imitation of Psalm cxxxvi. What mediaeval re-translator would have ventured on such a direct imitation of a Psalm with its canonical refrain *כי לעלם חסדו*? Ben Sira's imitation has left its mark on the liturgy, as Professor Schechter points out; rarely indeed does he miss a good point! But it is curious that the part of the liturgy which it resembles, the eighteen benedictions, is generally held to be very old, in fact pre-Maccabean in part. But the best evidence of the authenticity of the passage is given by Professor Schechter himself.

The reason for its omission by the Greek translator, who in this respect, as in so many others, was followed by his Syrian successor, is not hard to conjecture. Living at a time when the house of Zadok was already superseded by the Maccabean line, the grandson of Ben Sira recoiled from giving publicity to a hymn which claimed that the *בני צדוק* were specially selected for the priesthood. But it is just the prominence given to the house of Zadok which establishes its authenticity. For after the unworthy part played by the high priests of the house of Zadok during the Hellenistic troubles, it is highly improbable that any pious Jew—such as the author of this hymn evidently was—would feel so enthusiastic about this family, that their continuance in the sacred office would form the special theme of his thanksgiving to God. Such an enthusiasm could only have been displayed by one who knew the best of the Zadokides, namely Simon the Just, and who prayed so fervently for the perpetuation of God's grace upon the high priest and his children (ch. i. 24), that is by Ben Sira himself.

On turning to the Hebrew of the illustrative passage cited by Professor Schechter, one sees another strong proof of the authenticity of the Hebrew. The latter and none of the versions cites the "Covenant of Phineas" from Num. xxv. 12. (See however the Versions on ch. xlv. 23.) Yet the context here requires a reference to the "Covenant of Phineas," for otherwise the phrase of the Greek *καὶ γενέσθαι εἰρήνην ἐν ἡμέραις ἡμῶν* is meaningless. The reference is obviously to Num. xxv. 11—*לכן אמר הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום*.

It was imperative, even in a most cursory review of the Cambridge volume, to devote some space to this passage, for Professor Schechter has here restored fifteen verses to the ancient Hebrew literature. I am forced to pass over the facts that Saadyah Gaon and earlier liturgical poets clearly knew the Cairene text, and that the final acrostic, ably annotated by Dr. Taylor, reveals phenomena that, despite the corrupt state of the Hebrew and certain resemblances to the Syriac, argue against the supposition of the Hebrew fragments being a re-translation. It is an unproved assumption that the acrostic, as it left Ben Sira's hand, represented a complete alphabet. It will

be a matter of considerable moment to analyse Professor Schechter's list of parallels between Ben Sira and the Hebrew Bible. This list has been drawn up evidently by virtue of an extraordinary familiarity with Scripture, not by means of a concordance. But even if these parallels make it hard to feel confident that extant Psalms are of Maccabean date, the list proves nothing against the post-exilic origin of the Psalter. On the other hand, the state of the text and the curiosities of the versions derived from it will strengthen the hands of those, who, like Professor Cheyne, are convinced that textual emendation of the Massoretic text should take a bolder flight than has hitherto seemed safe. On one point, however, I feel strongly inclined to agree with Professor Schechter—namely on his conception of the state of religious thought in Judea in the second century B. C. There only remains one feature of the Cairene text on which I can now permit myself a few words. There are in the Cairene Fragments a number of "doublets" which have disturbed some students, and of which we are likely to hear a good deal from the opponents of the authenticity of the Hebrew. Of these "doublets" some are merely scribal errors (e.g. xxxi. 10, xxxii. 21). Some seem to be glosses to explain rare words, such as ברֵא for חֶלֶק (xxx. 14), or סָרִיס for נֶאֱמָן (xxx. 20). Some of them, however, are distinct variants, represented in the Greek and Syriac respectively, as Professor Schechter and Dr. Taylor themselves show. (But there are phrases in the doublets which are represented neither in the Greek nor in the Syriac.) It is highly improbable that a mediaeval re-translator would have had the critical insight to use the different versions, or that if he had used them he would have introduced the variants into one and the same translation. It is far more likely that there were distinct ancient recensions of the Hebrew, the readings of which were faithfully reproduced. It is evident, not only from these doublets and from the marginalia, but from the very differences between the Greek and the Syriac, that there must have been more than one recension of the Hebrew. It would not be uncritical to concede that some variants have in course of time arisen from the versions, especially from the Syriac. Something of this kind has undoubtedly occurred in more than one of the Talmudical citations. At all events the copyist of the Cairene Fragments who, whatever his faults, was scrupulously honest, introduced all the readings in his MSS., sometimes without regard to sense or spelling. But I venture to throw out the suggestion that there were some doublets in the work as it left Ben Sira's own hands. Several traces of these are discernible. Thus in xiii. 15-16 (Hebrew) we have the same thought repeated in very similar words, and the versions confirm the Hebrew in retaining

both. Again in the same chapter, towards the end, there are some passages about the rich and poor (passages occurring in the versions as well as in the Hebrew) which have all the appearance of doublets. Again the Hebrew and the versions show (e.g. xvi. 8-9) that Ben Sira fancied the idea of beginning consecutive verses with the same phrase. The origin of this idea is to be found in the same source as that from which Ben Sira consciously drew his main inspiration—the canonical Book of Proverbs. In this book the doublets are strikingly numerous. I quote only two instances.

(Prov. x. 2.)	וצדקה תציל ממות	לא יועילו אוצרות רשע
(Prov. xi. 4.)	וצדקה תציל ממות	לא יועיל הון ביום עברה
(Prov. xvi. 2.)	ותכן רוחות יהוה	כל דרכי איש זך בעיניו
(Prov. xxi. 2.)	ותכן לבות יהוה	כל דרך איש ישר בעיניו

Compare also Prov. x. 15 a with xvii. 11 a, xv. 8 a with xxi. 27 a, xv. 16 a with xvi. 8 a, x. 27 with xiv. 27, xv. 14 with xviii. 15, xvi. 18 a with xvii. 12 a, and the triplet xii. 14 a with xiii. 2 a and xviii. 20 a. Also, of course, there is a whole verse verbally repeated in xiv. 12 and xvi. 25. There are many similar phenomena in the canonical Proverbs, and though I do not suppose that Ben Sira had exactly our present text (my citations are restricted to section x-xxii) yet the close student of Scripture in general, and of Proverbs in particular, as Ben Sira was, he must have perceived these doublets, and as I venture to think may have proceeded to imitate them. He placed his doublets consecutively, for he always introduced something of originality into his imitations.

To Dr. Taylor students will be grateful for a fine English translation, for his Notes and Appendices. It will be long before a definitive edition of the original Hebrew of Ben Sira is possible. But Professor Schechter and Dr. Taylor have brought such an edition appreciably nearer. It is to be hoped that Professors Cheyne and Driver will apply their splendid knowledge of Hebrew to the elucidation of some of the many difficulties that remain. The controversy about the authenticity will be useful in bringing these difficulties into prominent light. Opponents will make useful suggestions and be the cause of more. I feel confident that the final verdict will be favourable to the pretensions of the Cairene text, which, corrupt and puzzling as it is, yet has preserved for us precious chapters from the original work of Ben Sira.

I. ABRAHAMS.